

Detainees tortured claim settlers

By Hugh Orgel
Tel Aviv

SECURITY officials in Israel are stepping up their efforts to crackdown on suspected members of a new underground. Authorities have arrested at least eight men suspected of forming a group, collecting arms and "planning attacks against Arabs." The arrests, which were originally shrouded in secrecy, have sparked widespread protests by other settlers.

The demonstrators charge that those detained are being tortured and denied legal access, and that their families are not being informed of their whereabouts.

On Monday, the High Court of Justice heard requests from lawyers and family members who sought access to the detainees. A representative of the State Attorney's Office told the court that officials with the General Security Services were preventing the lawyers from meeting with their clients for reasons of security and that the ban would last for "at least a few more days." The representative said security officials would turn over classified information to the judges in an effort to help them reach a decision in the case.

Over the weekend, hundreds of residents of Kiryat Arba protested the alleged torture of Israel Defence Force Lt. Oren Edri, one of the detainees. West

Bank settlers have meanwhile threatened to hold mass demonstrations outside the homes of General Security Services officials, thereby disclosing their identities, which are kept secret from the public.

They are also calling for the establishment of an independent commission to investigate allegations that security officials were torturing the detainees. Knesset Member Zevulun Hammer of the National Religious Party has called for an inquiry into the conditions under which Edri and others are being held and interrogated.

ARRESTS

The General Security Services has denied the charge that the suspects have been tortured. For his part, the extreme left-wing Meretz Cabinet Minister Yossi Sarid, a member of the ministerial committee on General Security Services affairs, said there was "absolutely no basis to the charges" the detainees were being tortured or abused in any way. "I can say clearly and even officially, that the investigations are being carried out according to all rules, laws, methods, and I can see no problem." Nonetheless, he pledged that complaints would be "investigated."

The Haifa District Court last Friday rejected Edri's appeal against his continued detention.

On Monday, a second army officer, Lt. Kobi Pinto, was also arrested in connection with the ongoing investigation into the suspected underground movement. According to Israel Radio, Pinto, a member of an elite combat unit, is a close friend of Edri's.

A day earlier, security officials arrested Ya'acov Ben David, of Kiryat Arba, a former Muslim who converted to Judaism 12 years ago. He is a member of the Ja'abari family, a leading Hebron family whose members have served as mayors of the West Bank town.

The other detainees include two brothers from Kiryat Arba, Eitan and Yehoyada Kahalani, who have been detained for nine days and are suspected of extreme right-wing activity. They were arrested in the Tel Aviv area, and reportedly were still not being permitted to speak with their attorneys or families.

Two other suspects, Elyashiv Keller of Hebron and Rabbi Ido Elba of Kiryat Arba, have been remanded for nine and 10 days respectively.

Meanwhile, two activists from the Kach Party, founded by the late Meir Kahane, have been released from administrative detention. They were imprisoned following the banning of the Kach Party and other extremist organizations.



Mr Avrohom Marom, the *baal simcha* (left), Rabbi Moshe Turban, Rosh Kolel Novosibirsk, Rabbi Shmuel Goldberg of Manchester, the mohel, and Chief Rabbi of Siberia Rabbi Yehuda Weissler, holding the baby, at the *briss* in Omsk.

A unique *briss* in Siberia

From L. Avon
Omsk, Siberia

THE new era of freedom to practise Yiddishkeit in Russia took yet another step forward last week. For the first time in more than 50 years, a *briss* has been performed on an eight-day-old baby, openly in the presence of a *minyan* in this Siberian town. This *simcha* was all the more special because the parents, Mr and Mrs Avrohom and Soroh Marom are a young couple who were born long after pre-communist times and have no memories of Jewish traditions.

It was mainly due to the behind the scenes intervention of Mr I. M. Cymerman of London, chairman of the Russian Immigrant Aid Fund (RIAF) and vice chairman of Agudas Yisroel of Great Britain, that the *simcha* was able to take place on time.

Mr Cymerman had received an urgent request from Rabbi Yehuda Weissler, Chief Rabbi of Siberia, to arrange a visa for a Manchester mohel, Rabbi Shmuel Goldberg, who was prepared to undertake the trip at short notice in order to

perform the mitzva. At present there is no mohel in Siberia. It usually takes two weeks for a visa to be processed, but some telephone calls by the head of RIAF and a visit by its Director, Mr Sholom Salzman, to the Russian Embassy in London for a meeting with a sympathetic top Russian official secured the necessary document.

BEST CLOTHES

Although it was only a few days before Rosh Hashono, Rabbi Goldberg set off on a flight to Novosibirsk via Moscow which was followed by a car journey to Omsk, where the couple live. The *briss* took place in the local shul—a small wooden building, heated by an open wood fire. A large number of people from the community were present, dressed in their best clothes. They had taken off work in the middle of the day in order to be present at this unique occasion. Most have never met a *charedi* before, let alone attended a *briss*.

Even a number of schoolboys braved the wrath of the authorities by staying away

from school (despite it being the first day of the new term) so that they could join in the *simcha*.

Speaking at the *Seudas Mitzva*, Mr Michail Birman, President of the local Jewish community, thanked Hashem for allowing such a great event to take place in their midst. The older men who remembered the "alte tzeiten" wept. They never dreamt that they would ever attend a *briss* again.

Both Rabbi Goldberg, who is a *magid shiur* at Shaarei Torah Yeshiva in Manchester, and Rabbi Weissler addressed the guests. The latter urged them to take an example from the young parents who wanted their child to start life the Torah way.

He added his blessing that the new member of Klal Yisroel would continue his whole life as it has begun, *d'derech ha Torah*.

Several newspaper reporters were present and the news of the *simcha* spread quickly to many Jewish kehillas in Siberia. Rabbi Goldberg spent Shabbos in Moscow and returned to England in time for Rosh Hashono.

Judaica theft suspect

By A Bohm
Budapest

INTERPOL has issued an arrest warrant for an Israeli citizen suspected of involvement in last year's theft of a priceless collection from the Jewish Museum here, according to Hungarian media reports.

The man is a Romanian-born Israeli. The 51-year-old suspect is reportedly a popular figure in the flea market in Jaffa, Israel. He is the third suspect in what has been described as the biggest theft of Judaica of this century.

The precious items, which were stolen last December, were recently discovered in Romania and returned to Budapest, where they have again been put on display.

All the suspects have been described as of Romanian origin. One of them is being held by police in Germany and reportedly will be extradited to Budapest by mid-September. The other is believed to be at large in Austria, and unlike the suspect in Germany, cannot be extradited to Hungary under existing law.

Meanwhile, the investigation into the theft is ongoing, with 25 of the 230 stolen objects still not returned to the Jewish Museum.

14th death

By Hugh Orgel

AN Israeli paratrooper was killed and another wounded while on patrol in the central sector of the southern Lebanon security zone last week.

Sgt. Ohad Nissim, 20, of Ashdod, who was buried on Friday, was the 14th Israeli soldier killed in action in southern Lebanon along the border since the beginning of the year.

Recent heavy artillery and mortar exchanges, mainly with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah forces, have been described as a "veritable war" by Israeli Defence Force commanders. Nissim was killed by long-range Sagger missile fire, launched from some two miles away, outside the zone.

Thousands visit Uman for Yomtov

THOUSANDS of Chassidim, Breslaver and others, spent Rosh Hashono in Uman at the *rziyun* of Rav Nachman ztuml, the founder of Breslaver Chassidus. The organisers arranged flights, accommodation and meals for the estimated 4-4,500 people who travelled from major Jewish communities throughout the world to this small Ukrainian town.

Despite the, at times, primitive conditions and surroundings, according to reports from people returning to this country before Shabbos, the logistics were carried out in a masterly fashion for an occasion which seems to draw an increasing number of participants each time. All spoke of the inspiring experience they went through, standing in prayer amidst such a vast throng at the *rziyun* of the Breslaver Rebbe ztuml.

Action to combat Reform in Israel

From Avrohom Isaacs
Jerusalem

AN extraordinary meeting of the Vaad Hapoel of Agudas Yisroel, which took place in Jerusalem on Sunday, resolved to take urgent steps to combat the newly resurgent attempts to gain recognition for Reform and similar groups in the Jewish state.

Chairman of the Vaad Hapoel Rabbi Yehuda Myer Abramowitz underlined the serious dangers which these groups posed, especially now that the courts had intervened in their favour. He pointed to the *churban* that they had created in the United States, where intermarriage and



Rabbi Abramowitz

assimilation had reached a staggering more than fifty percent in the Jewish community, and in some European countries where it was even higher. This state of affairs, which had been brought about mainly by the policies of these renegade groups, is undermining the very future existence of the Jewish communities in the diaspora.

Rabbi Abramowitz warned that with the acceleration of the peace process in the Middle East, if Reform is allowed to take root in the Holy Land, thousands of mixed marriages between Jews and Arabs could take place.

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Warming signals from Syria elicit hot demonstrations from the Golan

By David Landau
Jerusalem

PROSPECTS for peace on the Israeli-Syrian track appear to be warming up, and so, too, are the efforts of those opposed to

surrendering the Golan Heights. As Israeli officials voiced a measure of satisfaction over a speech by Syrian President Hafez Assad, Golan Heights settlement leaders and sympathetic

politicians launched a hunger strike at the ancient ruins of Gamla on the Golan.

Assad, speaking in a televised address to his newly elected parliament, pledged Saturday night to accept "the objective requirements of peace." Foreign Minister Shimon Peres responded to Assad's remarks, saying, "He is not talking war any more; he is talking peace."

Last week, Prime Minister Rabin for the first time outlined a two-stage land-for-peace

proposal that would involve a testing period of limited withdrawal on the Golan over a three-year period. And U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his top aides reportedly are consulting intensively about how they can best contribute to nudging the process forward. A quick shuttle by the secretary later this month is said to be in the works.

On the Golan Heights, meanwhile, settlement leaders vowed to escalate their campaign

against surrendering the plateau. For more than a year now, the country has been dotted with banners proclaiming "The nation is with the Golan." But the wind was taken from the movement's sails when the breakthrough with the Palestine Liberation Organization a year ago removed the Syrian track from the top of the agenda. Now, however, the battle is beginning to be waged in earnest, as symbolized by the site chosen for the hunger strike.

Gamla is a Second Temple-era

fortress that fell to the Roman during the Jewish uprising (66-70 CE) after heroic resistance. Many of its defenders committed suicide rather than be taken captive.

On Saturday night, thousands of Golan settlers and their supporters rallied in the townships of Katzrin, the so-called capital of the Golan Heights. At the rally Labour Knesset member Avigdor Kahalani urged Rabin to desist from his policy of withdrawal.

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PLEASE NOTE

The next issue of the Jewish Tribune will appear 14th after Succos, on Friday 30 September. Classified and display advertisements must be in our Head Office by 11.30am on Sunday 18 September.

We wish all our readers a
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